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EXPERIENCE AND PROBLEMS OF MAKING PACKAGING
AN EXPORT PROMOTION FACTOR^{1/}

by

Philip J. Turner
Eurographic Ltd.
United Kingdom

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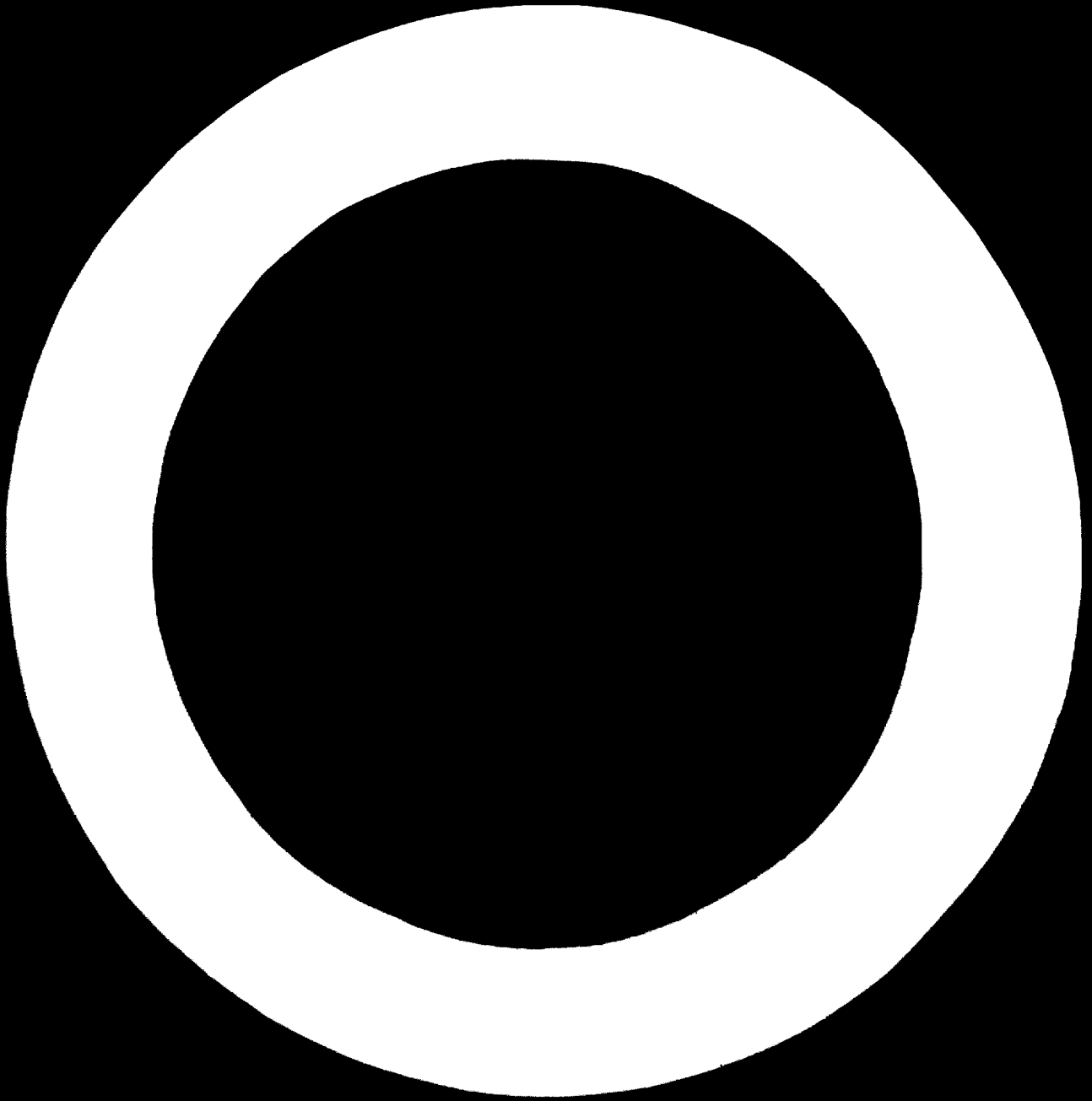
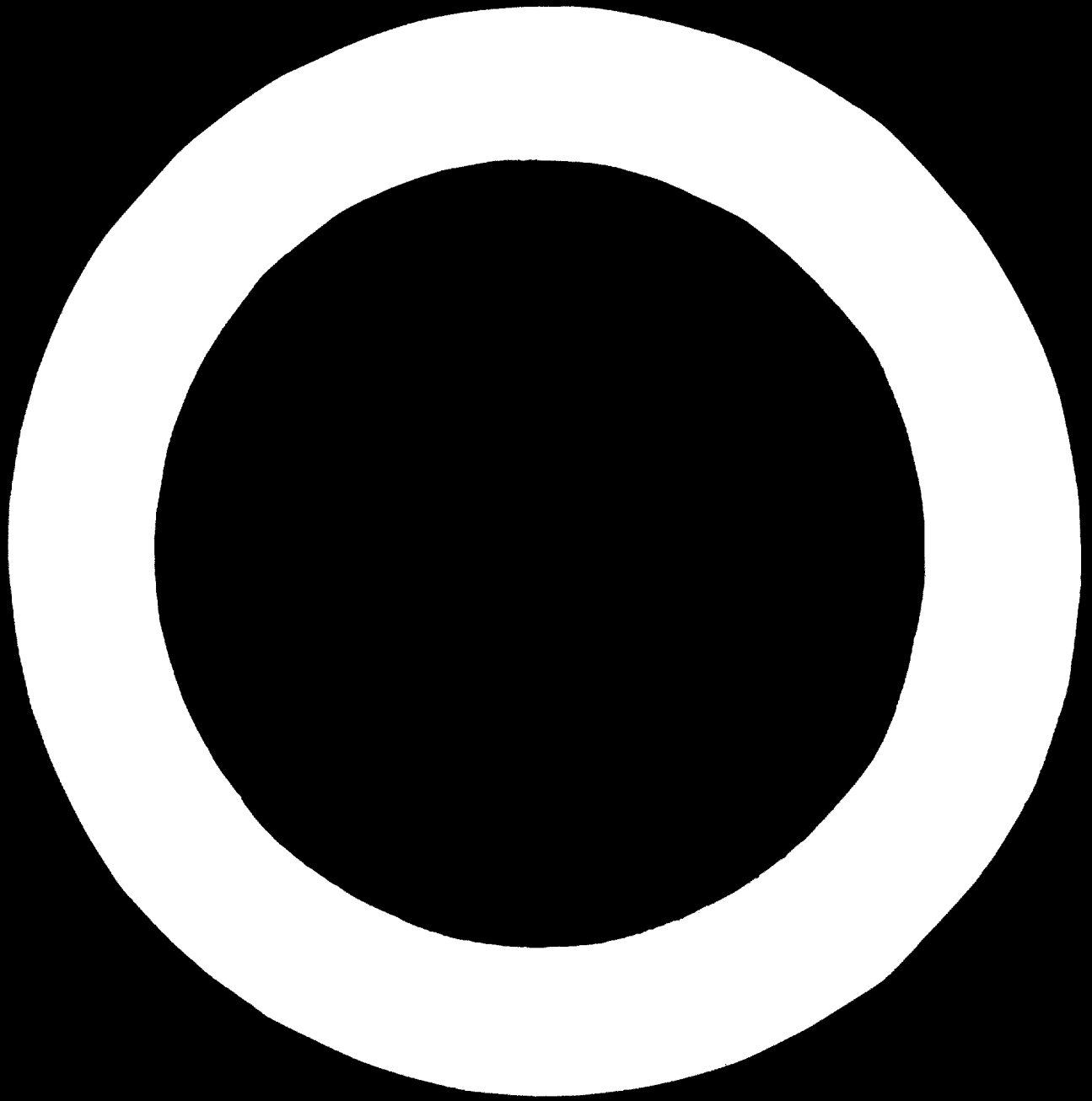


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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

In many ways I think the subject of this paper is the most important one we can discuss. But before you jump too quickly to the wrong conclusions may I say that I mean in no way to suggest that other subjects in our meeting are not important - they are without doubt very important - but that they play a supporting role, in their different ways, in the ultimate social and economic benefits to be achieved by efficient marketing and exporting of packaged products.

Frequently, it seems to me, we packaging experts, and others we associate with, need to remind ourselves that our true function is not to provide a service in packaging technology, chemistry, mechanical handling, packaging research, and so on; we are involved first and foremost in the **MARKETING BUSINESS** to work in our different ways, and within our different disciplines, to provide special skills and experience in achieving the successful marketing of products economically and efficiently packaged. We must regard ourselves as being, among other things, marketing front line troops. This is not a bad analogy. Successful front line troops must have efficient communications and lines of supply. We must know our strategy and the tactical details necessary in our commercial campaign. We must be familiar with the science and technology of our armoury, we must be able to recognise our targets - both our own 'inward' professional and ethical target and objectives and the 'outward' targets to be attained, often in countries abroad.

The analogy is far from perfect of course - surely no analogy is as accurate as the real-life situation it helps to describe. However it is clear that we must regard ourselves as committed front runners, the front-liners. As professionals, some of us can, but I believe must not, shelter in the backwaters of research, or production, or Government sinecures, or dally in academic, aesthetic, or management theory.

This is no less true of those non-experts who are attending this meeting. Indeed they may not be packaging experts but their responsibilities, their vision, their commitment to the final achievement for which they are responsible is exactly the same.

Most countries have the need or desire to export. We know what exporting is but do we appreciate why we think it is important, why in principle everybody seems to want to export to almost everyone else? In recent years some economists have provided detailed theory and evidence to expose certain fallacies in the economic benefits to be obtained from exporting. We know too that some countries - Switzerland and the USSR spring immediately to mind - have no real or continuing need to export goods providing they are prepared to make certain sacrifices. This being so, it seems to me a mistake for exporters to think they have before them an 'open-ended' problem without ever being able to see clearly the perimeters of it. Generally though we know that exporting is merely the activity of selling to people in another country - efficient exporting is not quite so simple.

The majority, however, do export either because they do not have a sufficiently wealthy internal economy to exist without exporting, or because they have important commodities for which there is a recognised world demand, with consequent economic and sociological benefit to all concerned. In this situation we can easily recognise that exporting is a regular part of 20th century commercial life.

CHAPTER 2

SOME EXPORT PROBLEMS

In exporting packaged products or trading within one's own natural frontiers there can only be three basic, essential component parts; the market, the product, and the packaging. Though this may seem an oversimplification at first hearing, I believe the difficulties which are encountered in exporting usually arise from the exporter's being ill-informed and incapable of co-relating the market to the product and the packaging, and exporting seems more difficult (and is) than internal trading due to the greater complexity of the work involved.

There are no particular difficulties to prevent exporters making realistic evaluations of their prospects or problems in export markets. Friendly countries, a world shortage of many commodities, a world ever hungry for certain essentials and non-essentials, national and international availability of relevant information, major improvements in international freight, forwarding and travel, help to make it easier perhaps than at any other time in history to make a success of selling one's product in another land.

Exporting American products to Canada, or Finnish products to Sweden, or products of the Cameroons to Chad and Nigeria are not necessarily very demanding in the export sense although they may well be in selling terms. Furthermore we know that the housewife in Amsterdam has, minor language differences apart, probably more in common in marketing terms with her counterpart in Antwerp than she has with a Dutch housewife in the relatively isolated Dutch province of Friesland.

We also know that the problems can be much greater in export situations in, for example, exporting pharmaceuticals to 'fragmented' international markets such as Bolivia, Haiti, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Turkey and Syria - the technical, marketing and package design problems are frighteningly complicated. As if this weren't enough imagine the difficulties and the responsibilities of marketing this pharmaceutical 'open-ended' product range in Israel, Mali, Iceland and Brazil as well ! Here we see, do we not, the emergence of some of the problems and considerations which confront us in situations of this kind - legal, climatic, sociological, cultural, economic, linguistic, transportation, competitive, graphic, political, practical, strategic, and many more. We need to look at the sources of supply of packaging materials, the converters, the existing and prospective in-plant equipment and machinery, the suitability of existing and prospective human skills and resources in production and marketing, and pack and product compatibility.

CHAPTER 3

DEFINING EXPORT TARGETS

Apart from certain easily recognisable exceptions the defining of export market objectives is primarily a matter of desk and operational research and experience. Research usually needs to be more thoroughly undertaken than conventional market research and we know that the exporter will have more than one market or group of markets to which he will consider applying his management, economic and marketing effort sooner or later.

In deciding to which market one should direct one's energies the issues are in my experience influenced by decisions often taken in a hurry by packaging executives presented with a situation of urgency. As a consequence packaging solutions are rarely as good as they should be. This in itself can create secondary problems with marketing and management pressure being put on executives to make decisions which would be probably better if more time were allowed for consideration and comparative evaluation thereby taking account of the different options available. The speed necessary in evaluating and deciding courses of action which will take advantage of marketing opportunities and objectives will if anything increase rather than decrease in the future and as a result better minds, skills and resources will be increasingly necessary in order to assist management in successful decision making.

We must, I think, not lose sight of the fact that the packaging user on the one hand and the consumer on the other, are, with some exceptions, primarily interested in a satisfactory solution not necessarily the most successful solution - especially if to obtain the latter valuable time and other opportunities are lost. (We, if we value our professional integrity, will aim to achieve the very best solution within the possibilities available to us. It is also up to us to increase the possibilities.)

I recall an unhappy case with a well-known company in Western Europe marketing a canned corrosive cleaner product in a keenly competitive market. The marketing people had been pressing for a plastic container which their technical colleagues had repeatedly said was not technically and economically possible. They received a shock and a marketing blow when the main competitor introduced a successful plastic container. In this situation the technical people were too cautious and the marketing of that company's products was restricted within the management responsibilities entrusted to the technical executives - a mistake, as events continued to prove. This was a case when the technical experts had too much influence - one usually finds that the real influence normally emanates from the marketing people, and behind them the consumer.

Situations of this kind, which, I feel certain, will be discussed during our meeting, raise the problem of the successful use of different skills in an inter-related way to obtain successful packaging results.

CHAPTER 4

MARKETING AND TECHNICAL FUSION

In human terms we have on the one hand the marketing experts and on the other the technical experts. You notice I say 'on the one hand and on the other' - implying a recognition of difference as if to define two kinds of expertise. Surely this is very wrong - there should not be a difference. Why cannot we create in our field of packaging an 'intellectual fusion' between marketing and technical experts? To keep the two groups separate creates operational difficulties, conflicting values, lack of sympathetic understanding, different and sometimes conflicting priorities, divided responsibilities, a division of loyalties. Why is this 'intellectual fusion' almost entirely absent in packaging situations? The reasons, for the division between marketing and packaging technology, are many and varied. Some are historical, some educational, others accidental.

We see evidence on all sides, not least in so-called advanced countries, of packaging being decided without a broad understanding. We see technical solutions applied which take little account of the marketing situation in which they have to perform. Design and marketing solutions are applied which recognise all too little the economic, technical or practical considerations to which the design solution has to apply. Most executives are themselves products of a vertical system of education, training, experience and outlook.

I think a major difficulty is the apparent problems of narrowly skilled men who find it very difficult to be proficient in fields of activity adjacent to those in which they are already qualified. One does not have to be particularly sensitive to notice an uneasy atmosphere, not to say belligerence, between say, on the one hand, an engineer or chemist and, on the other, a marketing man or package designer. In a wider context engineers, generally speaking, are frequently regarded as being rather unimaginative, comparatively conventional, very basic people, but there is no fundamental reason why this should be so any more than with other specialists. After all, some of the most enlightened imaginative people in history have been engineers, or have had engineering skills, and they have used conceptual thinking and broad vision with most exciting and important results.

Major packaging users do not always recognise packaging as a specific skill but only as a combination of applied skills which are in themselves frequently under-rated and usually mismanaged by the users. In my own work I emphasise constantly to client and colleague alike the need to gain lateral experience and expertise, even though it is expecting a great deal for a person to be specialised and authoritative in one subject yet able to relate his expertise to other associated disciplines.

(I would compare this with climbing mountains. The mountain one climbs is the specialist packaging subject whatever it may be. When one reaches the heights of the chosen mountain one can see the summit and remember the difficulties of the ascent. One can also look around and see the panorama of other mountains which is not possible when viewed from the valley or the foothills. Staying on the mountain heights or even attaining the summit, satisfying though it might be to have done so, is soon put into perspective by the sight of neighbouring mountains with their various climbs, heights, and characters, which provide a further challenge.)

A by-product and current problem arising from the educational system in Western Europe at least, which of course has been established only a very short time in the total time scale of civilisation, is that men find it difficult to relate their own vocational disciplines to other related disciplines and therefore to other men who are practising them. There are barriers of communication of many kinds between people of the same nationality but different professional backgrounds.

We know that chemists, engineers, marketing men, management staff in national industries or Government Departments, and so on, find it difficult to communicate with each other and to make the substantial progress which an understanding of the final result would indicate possible.

This, of course, assumes that the men themselves are as skilled as we are giving them credit for and it seems to me that in an age when more centralised information is becoming available much information can often be easily abstracted or retrieved and applied to the analysis and solution of different problems. There is little doubt that the greatest need is for men of vision with sufficient skills to evaluate the relationships between different disciplines and by so doing be able to prescribe solutions in the correct use of human skills and resources, materials and machinery towards the marketing objective.

There are three inseparable inter-related parts and we can assume that effective packaging is measured by the successes of the weakest strength. By that I mean the best packaging in the world will not compensate for a bad product and vice versa. Similarly if the excellent product and excellent packaging is marketed to the wrong country then success is hardly likely to be achieved.

Good packaging therefore must take into full account a significant amount of the three related parts of which the most important part is the market. In all the countries I know, it is the market and the ultimate consumer which in the long term define the quality and availability of products and the most efficient methods of packaging practice. If this were not so then packaging would be a sterile industrial economic exercise instead of the means of producing the economic vitality so necessary in international trading.

No doubt this subject will be debated at some length later on but I do not believe there is a convincing case for the technical packaging institutes to be developed only or primarily as reference sources of research and specialist bodies. The tendency will be to stretch even further the comprehension or 'intellectual gap' between themselves and the other component parts concerned with making successful packaging. One sees experts sheltering behind their skill of expertise as if frightened to come out into the open and discuss with knowledge and authority how their special skill can be related to a problem in question. We sometimes see them, do we not, helping to maintain the divisions which exist ?

For example some national packaging competitions have separate sections for consumer and transit packaging. The reasons for their separation do not convince me. So-called package designers - almost without exception they are merely, at best, graphic designers without any appreciable knowledge of marketing, packaging technics or 'across the board' ability to proceed with a problem from its evaluation to its effective conceptual solution - rarely have the opportunity of being trained in packaging per se. Amazingly, package design education and training is not covered in technical education institutions or in art or design establishments. There is even no advanced full-time packaging course, so far as I know, held in Western Europe ! The only such course in the West is, I am advised, one held at Michigan State University in the United States of America.

We have covered the need of the case for packaging 'intellectual fusion' and the case for 'packaging totality' - the inter-relationship of marketing-technical-design and economic aspects which, if properly understood and acted upon result in packaging success. What then are the problems and opportunities in export packaging ?

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSUMER COMES FIRST

I have said earlier that successful packaging begins with the existing or prospective consumer - by this I mean the identification of an existing or prospective market at the end of the distribution chain. At the other end of the chain there exists a product, or the likelihood of making one available, and between is the function of packaging which provides the 'bridge'. In almost all the successful case histories of good packaging to which we can refer we will recognise an acceptable product and a good market, existing or prospective.

Of course the market may not be clearly defined, and indeed the product can be adapted or developed to suit. One product well known to most people, Coca-Cola, has shown through an international marketing effort that although nobody really needs Coca-Cola it has been possible to develop an international trade of appreciable size basically on a one-product basis but using different types of packaging to suit local circumstances and opportunities. By using a generally consistent graphic style and an expertly detailed marketing strategy the company has brought an unessential type of product into many countries and has succeeded in cutting across social strata with the result that the product sells even to the impoverished.

If Coca-Cola is a good example of how one product can break into many markets and market segments through effective selling, then Chanel perfume is a comparably good case to illustrate a different product sold internationally in many varieties, which in its own field has become virtually a reference point for women in many parts of the world, even though the product range is directed broadly to a so-called middle-class type of consumer. Both Chanel and Coca-Cola take account of different national perceptions and have in design terms put their packaging 'into' the product with the result that, like such good package design, to see the pack is enough for comprehension - there is little or no need to read.

There are many successful examples which one can recall. Those of you who are familiar with Old Spice will know that the sound of the name and the simplified graphics (like Chanel) convey all that seems to be needed. Colman's Mustard in its old-fashioned style, Schweppes, Tomado in its efficient packaging for point-of-sale, Skol Lager (a product originating from the UK and not Sweden), Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes with their somewhat vague mid-Atlantic origin, and Unilever's international soap, Rexona, illustrate to me and I am sure to you, that a recognition of the marketing aim and making the packaging fit this, plus the very simple product it encloses, is not really so very difficult.

Of course, you may already be thinking, these products are supported by strong selling teams, expensive advertising, they have perhaps been established many years, some of the products are expensive and can justify the marketing and sales expenses to make the product sell successfully. All this is true but in all the cases I have quoted good, and in some instances excellent, packaging, has been used, in several cases for products which in themselves have no advantage over their competitors.

CHAPTER 6

THE IMPORT AGENT

Sooner or later in discussions on effective export marketing of packaged products the role of the import agent arises. Traditionally, of course, the import agent has acted partly as a genuine importing agency, sometimes on his own account, and also as a selling agent. Neither of these responsibilities is particularly onerous but it is in my experience exceptional if an exporter finds a totally efficient import agent to handle his products with the energy and success to which the exporter has a right.

There are many instances of exporters being restricted by contractual or other commitments to the import agent and generally speaking there are few benefits to be achieved through such an arrangement - it is far better to appoint one's own team, or form a company or organization to act on one's behalf. One international company of my acquaintance has a tradition of employing import agents in most countries of the world where they do not already have subsidiary companies, and one of the difficulties which has arisen in recent years is that the import agent separates the exporter from the ultimate consumer and the retail trade. The import agent acts as a filter of information, and this means that too much of the exporter's selling strategy is conditioned by the import agent to whom almost everything has to be referred. Not only in this instance but in many I can quote the import agent makes important decisions on packaging, the selling price of products in his market and so on. Of course the import agent has no particular knowledge, generally speaking, of packaging and his responsibilities are vested in his own immediate operation and take little or no account of the international considerations which prevail when exporting a range of products to many countries. This problem also arises frequently with multi-national companies who have in different countries their own selling or even manufacturing resources. One must attempt to get closer to the retail trade and to the ultimate consumer, not only to see if what the importer says is right but to see, often by research, what opportunities really exist for new packaging and not to take too much account of what exists already. After all the problem we are considering is not so much an analysis of what already exists but what can successfully be done in future.

CHAPTER 7

NATIONAL VERSUS INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A few international companies will decide centrally the packaging which they will use for all markets, being mindful that their aim will generally be to have standard packaging throughout which will only be altered and adjusted to suit particular local conditions.

A difficult question to answer is, when trading in very competitive and sophisticated markets, when should central decisions for standard packaging overrule any local national demands made by resident agents or local companies for special packaging to suit their market? In my experience in working with and for some of the largest multi-national companies in the world this problem has been a very real one because of the conflicting interests in multi-national companies. Internationally-trading organizations find it difficult not so much to rationalise the packaging requirements but to apply the decisions, usually taken from high in the organization, and communicated to their executives at a lower level, knowing full well that if they instruct a particular country to use a certain pack they are exposing themselves to possible criticism in the future in the product does not sell very well and an 'Itold you so' from the local man.

This problem, we know, is also related to the inadequacies of packaging and marketing knowledge and foresight which exist in most companies where executives are confronted with decision making in areas within which they are not very often professionally competent. Decisions hinge very much on the size of the existing or prospective market. A recent case in point occurred when a client's ambitions throughout Europe were such as to require basically the standard pack with minor adjustments for text changes. This was agreed with all subsidiary companies in many countries after careful presentation of a logical and persuasive case - with all, that is, except France. There existed in France at this time a good market already but the French management there could not find it possible to agree to the general propositions which were made centrally for the countries involved, even though the situation in France, because of its value to the client, had been fully taken into account. A difficult decision had to be taken. Should France be allowed to 'go it alone' or should she be instructed to come into line, with a

consequent souring of relationships internally and running some risk, if the French view were to be accepted, of loss of sales? In the end the French company came into line, little goodwill was lost and sales have not suffered, and have in fact increased even further. Packaging, and packaging decisions, can be a mixture of not only packaging expertise but of judgment, courage and determination.

This does bring into focus however the need there is to be fully aware of developments in packaging generally in countries and fields which are not necessarily related to one's own products. Consumers' habits and attitudes are frequently already established by their experiences of other products, apart from those which are directly one's own concern. As a result one must acquire a blanket knowledge of the consumer attitudes towards various products in various countries on which one can draw when considering solutions to special problems.

International products do not sell consistently in the same type of outlets. Some time ago I was asked to advise a well-known Anglo-Dutch company on the marketing of veterinary products throughout the world and found that some products were sold directly with the support of veterinary surgeons as ethical-type products but in one or two countries in South America we found that the products were sold through hardware stores. In becoming involved with particular marketing projects of this kind one accumulates and assimilates much marketplace experience, some of it which is quite unpredictable. One finds that in Finland for example, noted for its good design, high standard of living and buoyant economy, there is comparatively little understanding of packaging and marketing, even though Finland produces many of the raw and finished materials used in packaging. No doubt one of the reasons for this lack of knowledge is the relatively short industrial history and the size of the Finnish market itself. The situation in France however is one of a very significant industrial and commercial history, with a large home market and many important connections overseas. I do not think however that many would make serious claims that packaging is really well understood in France as it is for example in Sweden or Switzerland or the United Kingdom or the United States of America. This frequently benefits those who wish to export to France because it

enables the exporter to have a much better opportunity of achieving something significant through his packaging knowing that, very broadly speaking, local products tend not to be well packaged.

My view is that one should become well acquainted with the problems, visit the market, hold rational discussions with the local selling organization and in the end define what should be done. Too much is lost when the agent is allowed to have the final say because he is the local man on the spot.

This raises the question of undertaking comprehensive research on the effectiveness of packaging. I mentioned earlier the difference between a satisfactory solution and the best solution. Generally, I do not think it is particularly difficult to obtain satisfactorily designed packaging. To obtain the best possible is sometimes a theoretical objective because circumstances are continually changing and one cannot always catch up with them. However it is possible by thorough application and attention to detail to obtain packaging which falls only slightly short of perfection. In order to do this it is essential to research with existing and prospective consumers the attitudes they have to the product, to the existing and prospective packaging of the product and that of the competition. Part of this enquiry involves the separation in research terms of the product from the packaging, the price of the product, and the reputation of the organization marketing it. Any research specialist in this field will confirm that this is far from easy to obtain, but it can be done and I have case history evidence of work in this sphere which details a before and after situation concerning existing products with the new packaging compared to the old and with comparisons in sales and profitability figures. Here again we see an identification of a new area in packaging which extends the perimeters of the subject, in this instance ascertaining with greater certainty, possibly before full scale production, how effective a proposed new package is in comparison to the old one that it is due to replace.

CHAPTER 8

SOME TEXT PITFALLS

It would be inappropriate to discuss all the details of the more obvious pitfalls in package design for export but some of those worth mentioning include the important matter of texts, and linked with it the question of national and international packaging policy.

The problem of choosing the appropriate text, or texts, and translations, and indeed the common problem of whether to have international package design policy or a pack suitable for a particular market, are all interrelated.

There are generally three basic text policies available: firstly, one can use texts in the local language or languages; secondly, one can use the language of the country of origin; and thirdly, and in a growing number of cases, 'American' texts are suitable for an increasing number of commodities. It is also worth remembering that there are many cases where it is possible to use combinations of these alternatives.

In continental Europe the 'American' text policy is being increasingly pursued in the marketing of some commodities. This is particularly true in the case of products which are basically simple and consistent in marketing, and which have an authentic or pseudo American origin, like certain soft drinks and cigarettes.

One can, however, think of many products, including soft drinks, coffee, etc, which take the opportunity of embracing several languages on one pack which helps to give the consumer the impression that the product is marketed internationally, is accepted internationally, and is therefore available to the consumer with this underwriting, as it were, of reputation and success.

It does not follow that having multi-language texts is as simple as that. There is a need to bear in mind local traditions (which do not necessarily have to be followed) and the languages which the market expects or needs to see in the product field in question. In many cases these traditions are of long standing and in countries like Belgium (where French and Flemish

are used) and Switzerland (with German, French and Italian) there is a complete acceptability of seeing packs in a number of languages, often additional to the ones traditionally used in the consumer's own country.

This aspect is different again however in other countries in which for historic, political or commercial reasons there are other factors to consider. Canada (with French and English), South Africa (Afrikaans and English) and Yugoslavia (with its federated republic system) spring immediately to mind where local texts need great care in ways which may not be immediately apparent. Yet again, quite different considerations apply in, for example, Ceylon, India, China and the Middle East.

Coming nearer to home, one sees in the European marketing scene a breaking down of traditional barriers of nationalism. This is being brought about by the increasing political, economic and commercial unity inherent in the EEC and EFTA agreements. Packaging policies, now and in anticipation of events to come, should bear these developments very much in mind. Centralised packaging arrangements and trade mark considerations are especially important.

There are many cases where it is expedient to produce packs with texts either of the country of origin or in the language of the importing country. 'American' texts can frequently be substituted and in these cases it is still possible for the product to enjoy a certain, possibly somewhat shallow, cachet although how valuable this is in real marketing effectiveness is sometimes rather doubtful.

Inseparable from all these alternatives are the texts and declarations made necessary by mandatory requirements, particularly in the fields of weights and measurements, claims, additives, colouring matter, formulae, statements of origin, preservation instructions and other information. In well-ordered communities legislation of this kind is constantly changing and developing and is not imposed to frustrate exporters as we may think from time to time.

Mandatory requirements relate to the product, the exporting country and the importing country. Because of the need to consider all three aspects (and sometimes other considerations too), it is virtually impossible to keep up to date with legal requirements. Great care should be taken to anticipate the probability of change in statutory requirements.

It has been known in extreme cases for statutory requirements to be back-dated and there is more than one exporter who has found that goods packed and shipped correctly marked for the country of importation are incorrectly marked by the time they reach the port of entry and cannot be cleared without urgent re-marking. Long-term planning, the keeping of a watchful eye on developments, not to mention an active local man, will often considerably reduce the frequency of this kind of unhappy occurrence.

Certain Middle and Far Eastern countries have been criticised for this kind of legislation but, in my experience, the legislation of which exporters complain is often completely justified. Less easy to understand sometimes is the imprecise legislation and inconsistency which exists in such countries as the United States, France, India and Australia, where one would expect the machinery of legislation to be sufficiently developed and co-ordinated to prevent the problems and evasions which do arise.

CHAPTER 9

THE INDEPENDENT PACKAGING CONSULTANT

Let us turn now to the independent packaging consultant working on his own account or a group of packaging consultants. Such is the misunderstanding prevalent that it is necessary to describe what we mean by a packaging consultant. Briefly he is a person capable of seeing the packaging problem with the breadth of vision and expertise I have tried to explain earlier and a person capable, therefore, of approaching the solution from any angle. He does not need to be a designer, or an economist, or a technologist, or a marketing expert, as long as he is fully proficient in one of these or similar major aspects and is capable of considering skilfully and authoritatively the others. We do not mean a package designer, who will tend normally to be a graphic designer and is at his best designing within the current idiom, leaving others before or after to solve most of the other related problems of equipment, materials, economics, marketing and so on.

The consultant will work with complete integrity. His fee, all his fee, will come from the client and he will not take any financial inducement from anyone else in the execution of his consultancy work. He will not take a commission from the manufacturers of equipment, machinery, materials and so on which he may recommend. The client would be well advised to get a firm undertaking that this is so. The consultant will be disinterested, and committed in no way to promoting any particular supplier of hardware or material. He will have responsibilities only to his client and he will be only satisfied with the best. He will not claim to know all the answers but he will know where to find them and will vigorously pursue the right solutions to the problems. He will be in all probability practical, academic, visionary, imaginative, and flexible in outlook and approach.

CHAPTER 10

CHOOSING THE EXPERT

The advice I would give a client is to choose an expert who, above all, will define the correct solution and give him the best advice he can buy. The consultant's fee should be competitively priced for his performance and for the benefits to be gained from the solution. The client does not have to like the consultant, but he must like the results of his work, some of which are only assessed a long time after the normal relationships with him have ended. Should the consultant convince the client that he is the best expert he can employ, the client may assess how sensitive he is to his ultimate purpose and speak to people who know him professionally and even to his competitors if he has any. If a consultant is good enough he is likely to draw praise (perhaps grudgingly) from his competitors who should know him, his reputation and work, and are likely to be envious of his performance.

CHAPTER 11

THE EXPORTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

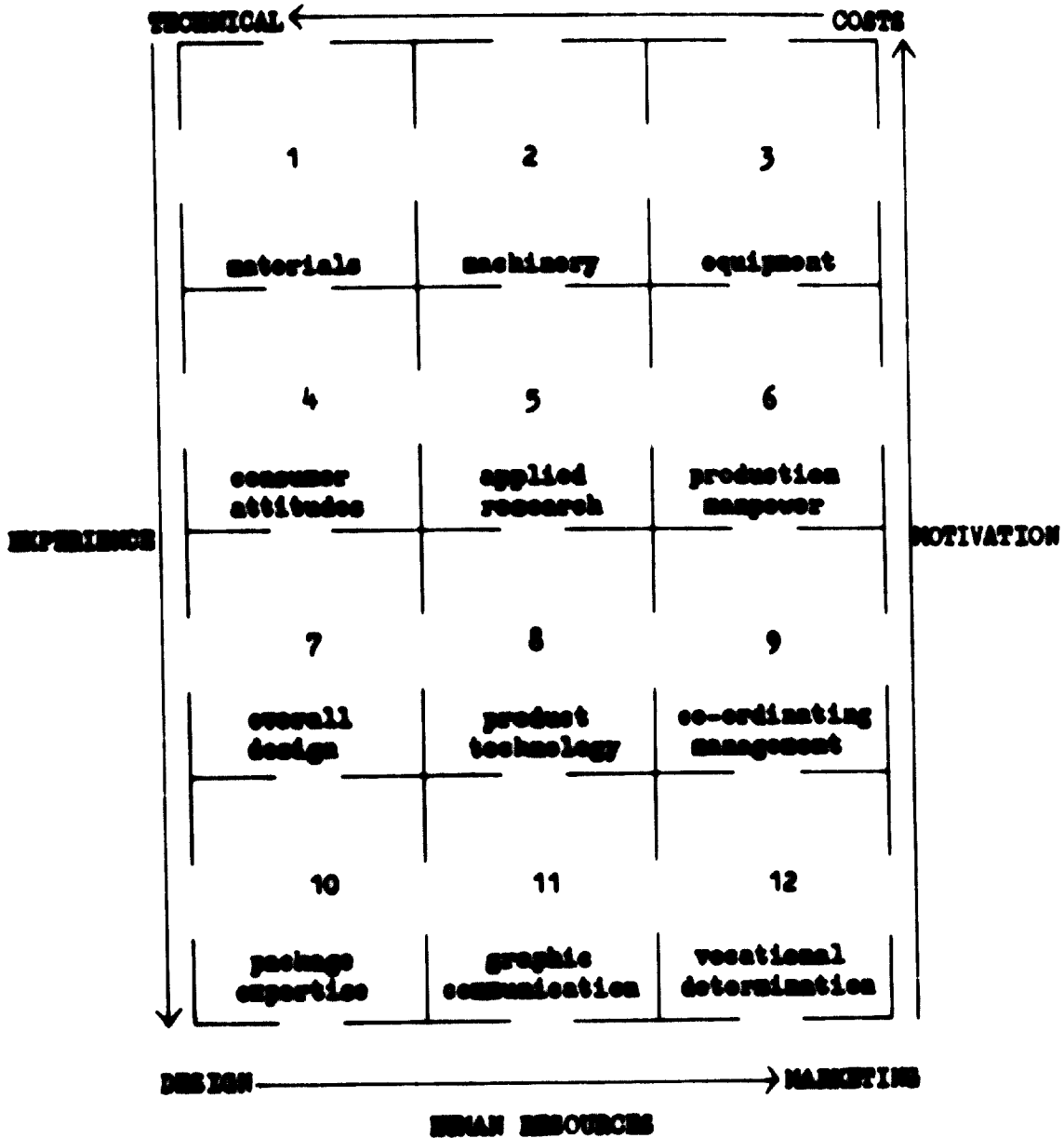
In all the work that we have spoken about there is the background responsibility which the exporter has not only to his organization but to his local community and to his country, and the international and human responsibilities he has when trading in international markets. The responsibilities to colleagues in his organization are obvious enough, their collective well-being and progress is clearly influenced by good strategy and the correct use of resources, human, financial and operational. Indeed the local community frequently supports the exporter by supplying the products. This is especially the case with foodstuffs. We also know that certain countries have secured a reputation for good quality products, and exporters trading internationally have the responsibility of upholding this reputation and by so doing, not only help themselves but other organizations who are in their turn trying to find world markets for their products. One can imagine the damage which can be caused by the marketing of bad quality foodstuffs by an export organization in a country which has built up a reputation over many years for high quality foods.

In any event the standards of consumers continue to rise and the appointed (and self-appointed) arbiters of consumer protection continue to develop. Some retail companies, such as Marks and Spencer in the UK, a leader in quality control, insist on a certain level of quality of both produce and its packaging and do not hesitate to reject consignments at the exporter's expense if conformation with their standards is not achieved. (Of course this seems a ridiculous state of affairs when on the one hand soft fruits which are perfectly edible are scrapped because they fall slightly below prescribed standards of quality and in another part of the world people die in their thousands every day through starvation.)

The international responsibilities of the exported product and its packaging are little different from those of a diplomat representing the exporting country, and it is not too ambitious to see the work in these terms. These little ambassadors get into people's homes and can create more goodwill, or illwill, than we might think !

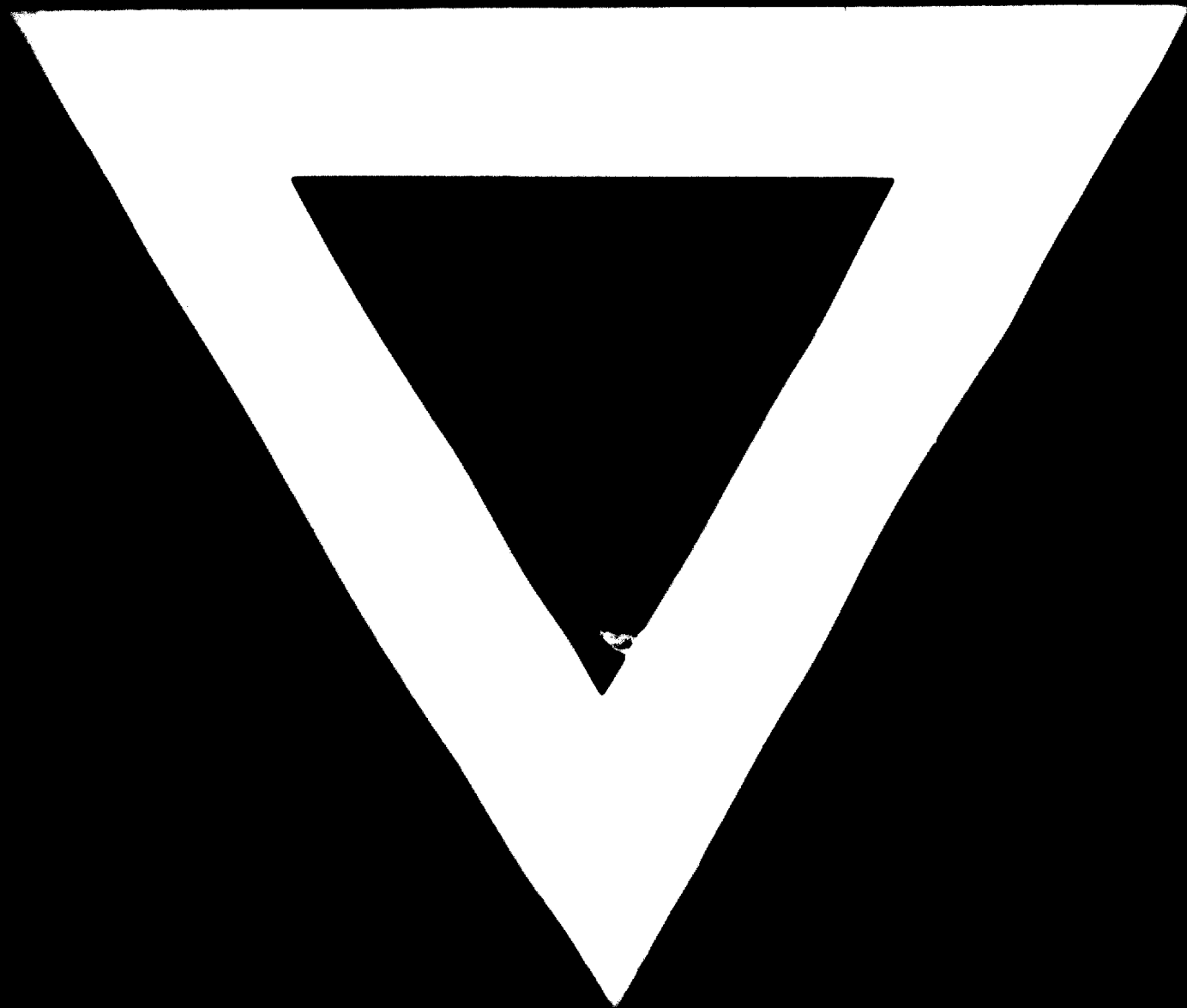
APPENDIX 1

FINANCE



Some inter-related component factors important to the achievement of successful packaging





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